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Golden Gate Audubon Society Newsletter

Volume 80, No. 4 April 1998

A Look Behind The Scenes

It's volunteers that make GGAS a success. After all, everyone's a volunteer except for our part-time Executive Director and even more part-time office person. But every once in a while, we realize that we don't give our volunteers enough public credit for the tremendous work they do. So this year we're going to try to highlight a few of our dedicated volunteers.

We're starting off with Ken Cardwell. Ken and his wife, Mary, one of the cofounders of Friends of Aquatic Park in Berkeley, attended one of our picnics

several years ago, and when we made a call for volunteers, Ken responded. What a break for us! Ken started off in the office answering the phone. But that didn't last long. Ken likes computers and soon he took over our membership effort, entering all the new members, deleting all the lapsed members, changing addresses, and preparing the labels for our newsletter, *The Gull*. It's a huge effort, and it has to be done every month.

But that's not all. Our computer membership program, created many years ago by another wonderful volunteer, Dianne Sierra, was getting a little old. New, more powerful database programs were being created, and the year 2000 was approaching. Most of you who have followed this computer issue know that most older computer programs cannot deal with the new century, and ours is no exception. We needed to upgrade. Ken took on the task and has crafted for us a new database program for our membership. It's in the testing stage now, and it's looking good.

So a tremendous thank you to Ken for all his wonderful work.

And who is Ken exactly? A native Californian, he was born in Los Angeles. Ken is now in his late 70s and is Emeritus Professor of



PHOTO BY ARTHUR FEINSTEIN

Faithful volunteer, Ken Cardwell.

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Field Trips Calendar

GAS field trips are conducted by experienced birders who wish to share their knowledge and love of birds with others. All trips are free of charge (except for entrance fees that may be charged by regional, state, or national parks) and are open to everyone, regardless of membership in the National Audubon Society or Golden Gate chapter.

See the March Gull for further details for trips from April 4 through April 24.

SATURDAY, APRIL 4 SUNOL REGIONAL PARK.

Meet at 8:30 a.m. inside the park entrance at the parking lot on the left. Take I-680 south to about 8 miles beyond the intersection of Hwy. 580, and turn off at Calaveras Rd. Go south (left) and follow the signs to Sunol Regional Park, about 5 miles. Leader: Ron Lindeman (510) 521-2324 \$(*)

SATURDAY, APRIL 4 BREEDING BIRDS OF SAN FRANCISCO.

Meet at 8:30 a.m. in the Land's End parking lot on Merrie Way just east of the Cliff House. Trip will end at noon. Leader: Harry Fuller (415) 668-8229 (*)

SUNDAY, APRIL 5 STRYBING ARBORETUM.

Meet at 8 a.m. (reminder: this is the first day of Daylight Savings Time) at the front gate of the Arboretum (9th Ave. and Lincoln Way) for this regular first Sunday of the month half-day trip. Leaders: Allan Ridley and Helen McKenna. (415) 566-3241.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 8 MINI-TRIP TO SUNOL REGIONAL PARK.

Meet at 9:30 a.m. at the ranger station parking lot inside the park near the green barn. (See April 4th trip for directions.) Rain cancels. Leaders: Anna Wilcox (510) 351-9301, and Jean-Marie Spoelman \$(*)

SATURDAY, APRIL 11 BOTHE -NAPA VALLEY STATE PARK.

Meet at 9 a.m. at the parking lot in front of the Visitor Center (at right just inside the park entrance). From the East Bay, take I-80 north to Vallejo; take the first Vallejo exit and go north on Hwy. 29. From San Francisco, take 101 north to Hwy. 37 (about 20 miles); turn right on 37 to Sears Point. Go left on Hwy. 121 north and east to Hwy. 29, thence north about 20 miles to the park (or go through Oakland as above: the distance is much the same, about 65 miles total). Rain cancels. Leader: Peter Allen (415) 892-8063. \$

SATURDAY, APRIL 18 POINT REYES NATIONAL SEASORE TENTH ANNUAL ALL-DAY BIRDING BLITZ.

(Joint activity: GGAS and National Park Service) Meet at 8 a.m. at the Five Brooks Trailhead parking lot, approximately 3.5 miles south of Olema on the west side of Hwy. 1. Leaders: Leon Abrams (415) 453-9980 (work), (510) 843-4107 (home) and Cathy Purchis (510) 865-9482. (*)

SATURDAY, APRIL 25 MINES ROAD, LIVERMORE.

Meet at 8 a.m. in the parking lot of the Nob Hill Shopping Center. Take I-580 east and turn right on No. Livermore Exit. Continue south two miles to the Nob Hill Shopping Center at So. Livermore and Pacific in Livermore. Leader: George Bing (510) 443-5868.

SATURDAY, MAY 2 SUNOL REGIONAL PARK.

Meet at 8:30 a.m. inside the park entrance at the parking lot on the left. Take I-680 south, turn off at Calaveras Road. (The freeway sign is marked Calaveras Rd., Dumbarton Bridge, Calif. 84.) Go south (left) and follow the signs to Sunol Regional Park, about 5 miles. Bring lunch and liquids in preparation for a 4-5 mile walk. We expect to see a variety of the common breeding birds, including flycatchers,

swallows, vireos, and warblers. This trip is also good for wildflowers. Heavy rain cancels. Leaders: Gloria Markowitz and Ken Ackerman (415) 892-2910 \$(*)

SAT. - SUN., MAY 2, 3 MAYACAMAS AUDUBON PRESERVE - CAMPING.

Mayacamas is one of National Audubon's newest sanctuaries, occupying substantial acreage in the mountains of Sonoma County on the east side of the Alexander Valley. The preserve exceeds 2000 feet at its highest point and features beautiful forests and meadows, including lofty Ponderosa Pines.

This year is the third year that Madrone Audubon has held an overnight camp-out at the preserve, and because of its success we intend to try it for Golden Gate. Our trip is scheduled at a prime time for bird migration, as well as wildflowers. We plan to have various walks and other activities, including a program for children planned and conducted by Louise Harm, GGAS Education Committee Chair.

Each person or family attending the camp-out will be expected to provide all of their own camping equipment, tents, stoves, food, and beverages. We are arranging for a Porta Potty to be at the campsite, and each person attending is expected to contribute \$5.00 to its cost.

This trip is by reservation only. There will be a midmorning bird, wildflower, and nature hike on Saturday, and in the afternoon, for those interested, there will be an optional wine-tasting tour in the Alexander Valley. After dinner on Saturday night, there may possibly be an "owl walk." On Sunday morning there will be a further bird, wildflower and nature exploration that should be completed by noon, after which everyone is on their own. Leader: George Peyton. Call (510) 444-3131 (weekdays) for reservations. \$

**SUNDAY, MAY 3
STRYBING ARBORETUM.**

Meet at 8 a.m. at the front gate of the Arboretum (9th Ave. and Lincoln Way) for this regular first Sunday of the month half-day trip. The Strybing Arboretum is a delightful section of Golden Gate Park, with several "micro-habitats" attracting a varied array of resident, migrant, and vagrant birds. Beginners and all others welcome. Leaders: Allan Ridley and Helen McKenna. (415) 566-3241.

**SUNDAY, MAY 3
WILDCAT CANYON REGIONAL PARK.**

Meet at 8 a.m. by the Arlington Clubhouse on Arlington Blvd. (next to the tennis courts between Brewster Dr. and Thors Bay Rd.) in El Cerrito. From there we will drive a short distance to the trailhead on Rifle Range Rd. We will encounter hills as we walk a transect of the canyon to bird the brushlands, oak woodlands, riparian streamsides, and grasslands. We anticipate seeing a few late migrants such as Western Tanager and a good representation of nesting birds including Grasshopper Sparrows and Lazuli Buntings. We will also identify common trees of the area. People with allergies should be aware that we will encounter grassy conditions. Bring lunch and liquids for a six-mile hike. The trip will end at 2 p.m. Leader: Malcolm Sproul (510) 376-8945. (*)

**SATURDAY MAY 9
BRIONES REGIONAL PARK.**

For this half-day trip meet at 8 a.m. at the west entrance off Bear Creek Road, at the parking area on the left, just beyond the fee booth. From Oakland take Hwy. 24 and exit at the Orinda turnoff. Turn left and go under the freeway on Camino Pablo. Continue northwest about two miles to Bear Creek Road. Turn right and go about 4.5 miles to the Briones Regional Park entrance on the right (just beyond Happy Valley Road). From the Richmond area, take San Pablo Dam Road to Bear Creek Rd.; turn left onto Bear Creek Road. From Berkeley, cross through Tilden Regional Park on Wildcat Canyon Road, continuing

beyond Inspiration Point. Cross San Pablo Dam Road onto Bear Creek Road. We should see and hear breeding birds such as Lazuli Bunting, Chipping Sparrow, Lark Sparrow, Black-headed Grosbeak, Ash-throated Flycatcher, orioles and more. Leader: Bob Lewis (510) 845-5001. \$

**SUNDAY, MAY 10
MT. DIABLO STATE PARK.**

Meet at 9 a.m. at the Rock City parking lot, one mile after passing through the South Gate entrance. Take Hwy. 24 to Walnut Creek, then go south on I-680 to Danville. Take the Mt. Diablo Rd. exit, go left under the freeway and follow the signs to Mt. Diablo State Park. We will look for Rufous-crowned and Sage Sparrows, Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, swifts, swallows, woodpeckers, and warblers. Bring lunch and liquids. Trip ends about 1 p.m. Leader: David George (510) 339-6848. \$(*)

**WEDNESDAY MAY 13
MINI-TRIP TO BRIONES REGIONAL PARK.**

Meet at 9:30 a.m. at the west entrance to the Park, off Bear Creek Road, at the parking area on the left, just beyond the fee booth. See May 9th trip for directions and expected birds. Leaders: Anna Wilcox (510) 351-9301, and Jean-Marie Spoelman. \$

**SATURDAY MAY 16
BOUVERIE AUDUBON PRESERVE**

(Near Glen Ellen). This 500 acre preserve is known for its flowering plants (over 350 species) as well as 100+ bird species. The trip, for Audubon members only, will be from 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Bring lunch and wear hiking shoes for a 2 to 5 miles mildly to moderately strenuous hike. The group will be divided into small groups and paired with a Bouverie Audubon docent. This trip is by reservation only. To reserve a space call (707) 938-4554 ASAP. Directions and information about the meeting time and place will be mailed to participants.

**FRIDAY, JUNE 5 – SUNDAY, JUNE 7
YOSEMITE'S BIRD LIFE.**

The lower and middle elevations of Yosemite National Park are alive with singing birds in early June. A variety of habitats support a rich diversity of bird life, typically including seven types of flycatchers (four *Empidonax*), three vireos, seven warblers, and many other species in full song and breeding plumage. Meet at the Big Oak Flat entrance on Friday, June 5, at 3 p.m., and on Saturday, June 6, at 7 a.m. (If you arrive later Saturday morning, meet the group in Hodgdon Meadow behind the Hodgdon Meadow Group Campsites.) The meeting place is the large parking lot 100 yards inside the park entrance on Hwy. 120 (50 miles from Yosemite Valley). Nearby campgrounds include Hodgdon Meadow and Crane Flat in the Park – reservations required – (800) 436-7275; Carlon and Middle Fork (primitive Forest Service campgrounds) on the road to Hetch Hetchy, and Sweetwater on Hwy. 120. Lodging on Hwy. 120 includes Yosemite Gatehouse (209) 379-2260, Evergreen Lodge (209) 379-2606, Lee's Middle Fork (209) 962-7408, and Buck Meadows Lodge (209) 962-5281. Bring warm clothes, rainwear, rubber boots (wet meadows) and a large flashlight for owling. Be prepared to pack a lunch and walk about six miles. Leader: Dave Quady (510) 704-9353. \$ (*)

PLAN AHEAD:

- 1) Lundy Canyon, Mono Lake Area, June 14, Rusty Scalf (510) 666-9936
- 2) Yuba Pass/Sierra Valley, June 20-21, Peter Allen (415) 892-8063
- 3) Lassen National Park, June 26-28, Murphy Family (415) 564-0074

Trips marked with a (\$) go to parks or other sites which require an entrance fee. Carpooling arrangements will be attempted for trips marked with a (*). See below. Problems, etc.: If you need a ride or can take a passenger, if you need information and have difficulty reaching a field trip leader, if you have suggestions for trips, or if you are interested in leading a trip, call Lillian Fujii (510) 236-4167, Field Trips Committee Chair.



The moment the rain stopped and the sun shone brightly, birds as well as people brightened and took notice of spring. Among many bird species, this time of year means the beginning of courtship. There are far more ways to woo a mate than there are species of birds – enough to fill a book – so let's stay with the ones we are most likely to see. It makes sense for birds to have specific songs and displays so that species don't intermingle. Therefore, you have to know what to look for with various birds.

Not every species has the same progression of courtship rituals, but generally it all begins with the male, who is quite spiffy in his new feathers, establishing a territory. Songbirds let loose with their finest arias, sometimes flashing some conspicuous bit of plumage. This is to let any other males know that this is his stomping ground. The male is so determined to defend his territory that he often attacks the very male he is trying to impress. Then he catches on that she isn't fighting back or behaving like a rival and is even calling him seductively. Many females act submissive, fluttering their wings like baby birds and begging for food. Courtship feeding is part of the ritual for many birds. The female is the one doing the choosing; she basically accepts the male. This may take a bit of time. But once she makes up her mind, a pair bond is formed, strengthened by more rituals

such as mutual preening and the offering of nesting materials. Some species form lifetime bonds (Bewick's Swans, e.g.) while others, such as ducks, form partnerships that last only as long as it takes to copulate. Most last the length of a breeding season, as long as it takes to get the kids raised and independent. Pair bonding is followed by mating and nest building, then laying, brooding, and hatching the eggs.

Displays have many variations, and bird watchers have their favorites. My backyard varieties have already begun pairing after appearing singly at the feeders throughout winter. The male titmouse is regaling us with his ringing "Sweet! Sweet!" as he flares his crest for the female nearby. The male Nuttall's Woodpecker is doing a lot of head bobbing and flaring his crest while the Acorn Woodpecker is doing aerial displays from the top of a telephone pole. Some woodpeckers use drumming to attract a mate.

Some day I hope to witness a woodcock's magical courtship flight, performed at night and likened to a leaf fluttering to the ground. I also hope to see some of the displays performed by prairie chickens, where they fill colorful neck pouches with air, hoping to attract females with their "booming" as they expel the air. Males congregate at leks or dancing grounds (open areas), and the females gather like concert fans and pick their favorites. Sandhill cranes can be seen in winter in the central valley,

where they begin warming up their dancing skills, tantalizing us with what must be a grand type of slow-dancing as they lift themselves off the ground with 6-7 foot wingspans. Of a more exotic nature are the lyrebirds, found in Australia. Often featured in nature films, they perform impressive acrobatics in an attempt to allure a mate.

Some of the most spectacular aerial displays occur among raptors. These are the ones I remember most vividly. Red-tailed Hawks are most visible, usually alerting you to their courtship with their shrieking. They spiral upwards with the male above the female. The male dives toward the female, and they sometimes lock talons as the female rolls over. One pair I watched got tangled up and plummeted to a grassy slope, looking somewhat surprised at the outcome. The sky dance of a male Northern Harrier dazzled me at the Audubon preserve at Tomales Bay. From a near standstill in the air, he did multiple U-shaped loops, sometimes throwing in a barrel roll and a somersault. SHE was impressed from her perch atop a tall shrub.

Another favorite was the pair of White-tailed Kites I observed above an apple orchard in bloom. They, too, had interlocked their talons and resembled a beautiful white helicopter as they whirled to the ground, breaking apart at the last possible instant. These are just a few airtype displays used to grab a female's attention.

Some water displays are amaz-

ing. Western Grebes do a wonderful tandem "race" across the water, literally propelling themselves vertically with their feet on top the water while in a mirror image of one another. Loons and other water fowl have a variety of aquatic "dances" during courtship.

If the weather holds out, I hope you are lucky enough to enjoy a few of the various courtship spectacles available in spring. Don't forget to stop and listen to the abundance of gorgeous bird-song.

Volunteer

Continued from page 1

Architecture at the University of California at Berkeley. He was the Department's Acting Chair and also Associate Dean of the College of Environmental Design. He also initiated the University's first course on historic preservation.

Ken also wrote the definitive work on one of the Bay Area's most well-known architects, Bernard Maybeck. As you can see, Ken has brought a certain distinction to the office.

He is now President of the Berkeley Historical Society in addition to being a GGAS volunteer, and he certainly provides the answer to what happens when one retires. Clearly, one becomes more active than ever. Thank goodness and thanks, Ken!!

Wine & Cheese, Anyone?

Isn't it always the case? . . . You go out birding for a while and build up an appetite. You reach in to your backpack only to realize that you've left the brie and merlot at home. Another perfectly good outing ruined!

Well, have no fear. This time GGAS has you covered. We will be having a wine and cheese tasting to celebrate John J. Audubon's birthday on Sunday, April 26 on the grounds of the Beautiful Dunsmuir House and Gardens Estate in Oakland from 2 - 4 p.m. And of course, because it is Audubon's birthday and we are birders, we will also lead a bird identification walk on the grounds at 1 p.m. before the tasting, so bring binoculars if you have them. Great wine, great cheese, and hopefully some great birds . . . what more could you ask for?!

A donation of \$25 per person in advance (\$30 at the door) is requested. All proceeds from the event will help support Golden Gate Audubon's conservation and education programs. To pay in advance simply fill out the slip below, cut it out, and mail it with a check made payable to GGAS to:

**Golden Gate Audubon Society
2530 San Pablo Avenue, Suite G
Berkeley, CA 94702**

For more information, call the office at (510) 843-2222.



☐ **YES,** I would like to join you on **April 26** for a great day of birds and wine! Included is my payment for the event. See you there.

There will be ____ person(s) attending at \$25 per person.

My payment totals: \$_____

The Man Behind The Bird

by Harry Fuller

"Though a taxidermist of nunch skill, Mr. Charles Allen is more widely known among ornithologists by that little fairy creature which makes its appearance in the early spring, known as Allen's Hummingbird." – In Tamal Land, a Marin guide

The Allen's Hummingbird (*Selasphorus sasin*) is the smallest breeding bird in the Bay Area. It is generally a full gram or more lighter than either Anna's Hummingbird or Bushtit. It is also the only bird ever named for a Bay Area resident.

This aggressive little species was named for Charles Andrew Allen (1841–1930) who lived most of his adult life in Marin County. He was born and raised in Massachusetts, however, and worked at various jobs, including taxidermy.

Married in 1870, he and his wife Abby moved three years later to Marin County where they raised their three daughters. His last residence there was on Meadow Way in San Geronimo. The old house is gone, the lot subdivided. But the heavily wooded hills are still just across the road from Allen's old home-
stead.

It was somewhere near here that Allen shot the small birds that he sent east to William Brewster with a note saying they seemed to be a new species. Many years later, Allen's account of the hummingbird named for him turned up in Bent's *Life*

Histories Of North American Birds.

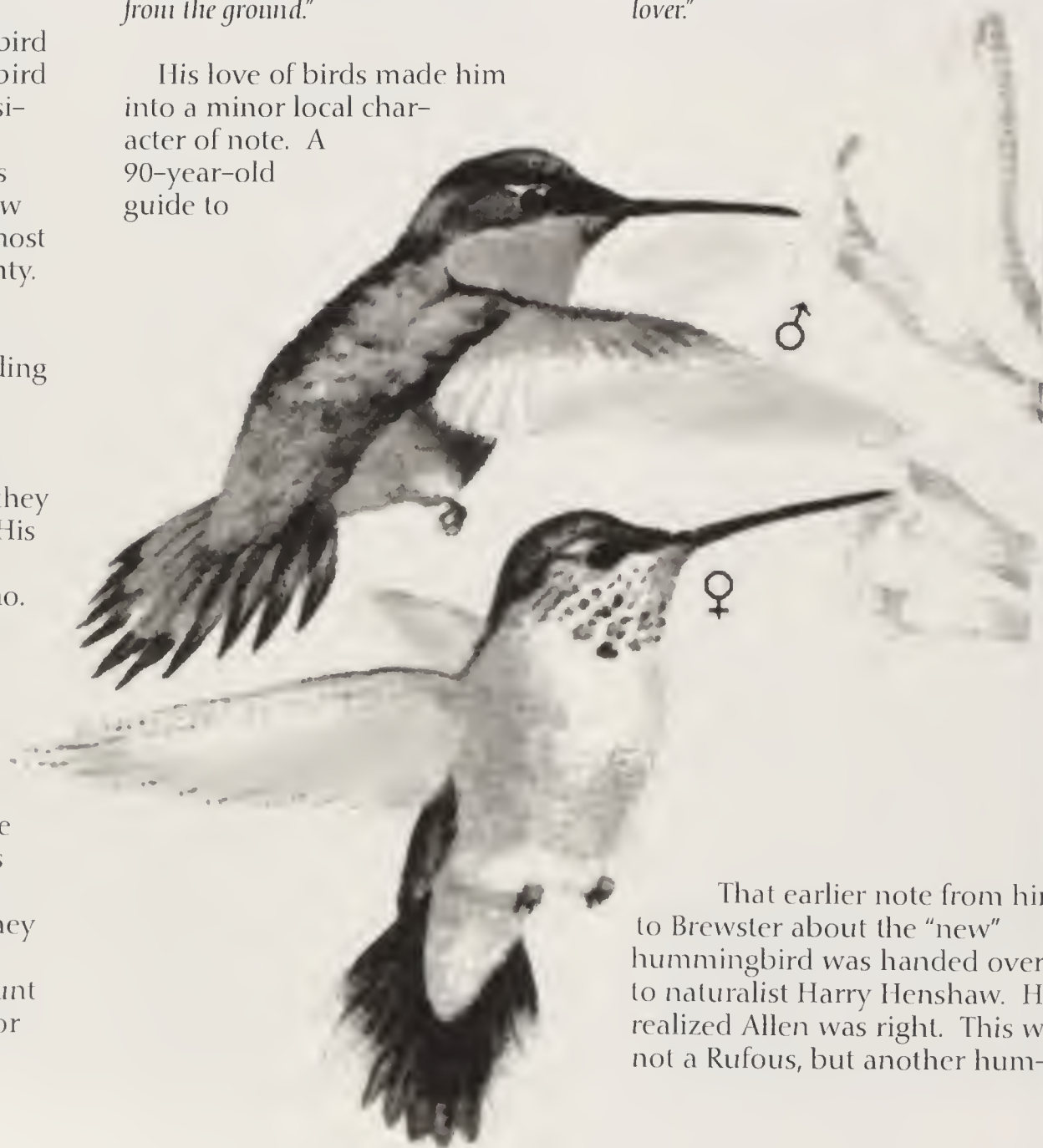
It was a detailed letter to Major Charles Bendire (of thrasher fame) that was quoted by Bent on the Allen's Hummingbird:

"Allen's hummingbird arrives. . . . about the middle of February.... They select all sorts of situations and various kinds of trees and bushes to nest in. I have found their nests as low as 10 inches and again as high as 90 feet from the ground."

His love of birds made him into a minor local character of note. A 90-year-old guide to

Marin entitled *In Tamal Land* describes him thus:

"If the traveler is interested in these woodland tenants [birds], and would learn something of their habits and life, he should visit one who knows them as Thoreau knew all the wild and untamed things of nature. A short distance from Fairfax the San Geronimo Valley, nestling among the hills, is a fitting location for this naturalist and bird-lover."



That earlier note from him to Brewster about the "new" hummingbird was handed over to naturalist Harry Henshaw. He realized Allen was right. This was not a Rufous, but another hum-

mingbird species and so named it after Allen. It turned out that the first scientific description of this bird had been written by a European based on a specimen from Mexico. However, the popular name stuck as it was Allen who first noticed this bird and pointed it out to American scientists.

Joseph Mailliard was a Curator of Ornithology at the California Academy of Sciences. In the Academy archives is a copy of his tribute to Allen. He taught much to the future scientists. Mailliard wrote:

"Allen occupied, with his wife and first child, a cabin on the edge of a redwood forest from which most of the good timber had been taken, and he was making a living by collecting specimens of birds and small mammals to sell to collectors, in Atlantic states mostly, and by mounting deer heads for hunters . . .

Allen could hardly be called an ornithologist and he had not had much opportunity for education. He was not a student, but an excellent collector who became well versed in the habits of birds and other animals with which he came in contact. He certainly was a handy and interesting man to be with in camp, and a pleasant companion in the field."

"Pleasant companion." Not unlike Allen's tiny namesake buzzing around the nearby flowering bush as you stand there with binoculars to your eyes.

Gifts and Bequests

John & Ruth Anderson, Bob Battagin, Edward & Mildred Bennett, George & Virginia Bing, Ellen Butler, Bruce & Myra Cobbledick, Eleanor Crary, Mrs. Afton Crooks, Edwin & Ira Dankworth, Martha Davis, Ruth Dement, Lisa & John Doyen, Richard Gale, Maurice & Virginia Gerritsen, Albert & Wilma Ghiorso, David Hamilton & Nancy Huneke, Robert Hodas, Bruce & Jeannette Howard, Elizabeth Land, Wayne Lazarus, Lucien & Louise Le Cam, William & Toni Link, James J. Ludwig & Eileen D Ludwig Foundation, Jean MacRobbie, Sylvia McLaughlin, Gloria Markowitz, Judith Pemberton, Susan Peters, George Peyton, Mauricia Price, Krehe & Katherine Ritter, Karen Rosenbaum, Judith Rothman, Carolyn Sanders, Megan Thomas.

Clapper Rail Circle

Mary Betlach, Bruce & Jean Conner, Hugh Cotter, Paul Eisenhardt & Elizabeth Chaney Eisenhardt, Caroline Erickson, Patricia Gannon, Hollis Greenwood, Steven Hayashi & Lillian Fujii, Health Plus - Regina Phelps, John Lambert, R. J. & Kathryn Riddell, Ann Witter-Gillette.

Least Tern Circle

Jean Albrecht Lucken & Ernest Lucken, Elizabeth Rosenberg & John Kenny

Panama Committee

Russell Scalf

Memorial

George Homem in memory of Vi Homem
Jerri Grindle in memory of Bea Cote

In honor of Connie Hosemann's 60th birthday

WM. & Barbara Friede, John & Tara Hege, Virginia Zivetzig

The Society welcomes gifts in general or gifts in honor of or in memory of relatives and friends. Such gifts will be used as specified by the donor or, if unspecified, at the discretion of the GGAS Board of Directors. This includes their use of general GGAS activities or for special programs of the Society. Please send your gift in the form of a check made out to Golden Gate Audubon Society, 2550 San Pablo Avenue, Suite G, Berkeley, CA 94702. All gifts are tax deductible. The Society is also appreciative of any bequests. Such bequests should specify as recipient the Golden Gate Audubon Society, Inc. All gifts, donations and bequests will be acknowledged in *The Gull*, as well as personally on behalf of the Society by the Secretary.

Experts Wanted

The Friends of Sausal Creek are a group of people from diverse backgrounds, including scientists, teachers, local merchants, and city employees, who are working with the City of Oakland and Alameda County to improve the Sausal Creek watershed. The headwaters of the creek are located in Joaquin Miller Park and Montclair. It then runs parallel to Park Boulevard and Fruitvale Avenue to the bay.

In February of 1998 we began a volunteer monitoring program designed to expand our knowledge of the creek and surrounding watershed. Among other

things, we monitor bird use of sites restored with native vegetation versus sites dominated by exotic plants along the riparian corridor, as well as compiling a species checklist for the watershed.

We have begun the pilot phase of the monitoring program at the end of February and are committed to continue at least through the end of May. If initial interest is any indication, we will continue to monitor the watershed's birds for many years to come.

We are now seeking the assistance of a few expert birders. Your knowledge will help us achieve our goal to move from a

pilot phase to actual data collection as soon as possible. Come join us! An alliance between the Golden Gate Audubon Society and the Friends can only be mutually beneficial! Our bird monitoring team will be meeting in Dimond Park on Saturdays: April 25 and May 23. Feel free to join the Friends' monthly meetings (the third Wednesday of each month) and workdays (the Saturday after each monthly meeting) as well.

For more information, call Anne Hayes at the Aquatic Outreach Institute (510) 231-9566 or Martha Lowe at (510) 339-7903.

Second Annual Earth Day Waterfront Clean-Up

The GGAS East Bay Conservation Committee is holding its second annual Earth Day clean-up. We will be picking up trash along the waterfront in Alameda. The litter is not pleasant to see and is certainly not beneficial to our avian friends. So celebrate Earth Day this year by joining us for this event. Your efforts will be rewarded by the view of a clean waterfront and the knowledge that you have helped our wildlife!

Date: Saturday, April 18, 1998 (Heavy rain will cancel)

Time: 10:00 am to noon

Location: Shoreline Park, Bay Farm Island, Alameda

Directions: Take the High Street exit off Highway 880, and head towards Alameda on High. Stay on High for approximately 1.5 miles, then turn left at the traffic light onto Otis Drive. Immediately after crossing the bridge, turn right onto Island Drive. At the first traffic light, turn right onto Robert Davey Jr. Road (formerly Bridgeway Road), and stay on this road until it ends. Turn right onto Aughinbaugh Way, and at the end of this road, turn right onto Sea View Parkway. Shoreline Park is on the left. Drive down Sea View for about 0.2 miles, and park on the street. We will meet near the picnic tables and restrooms.

Other Information:

Bring gloves.

Wear old clothes and dress in layers.

The City of Alameda Recreation and Park Department will supply garbage bags and will dispose of the trash that we collect. Bring binoculars if you would like to do some birding. For more information, call Mary at (510) 523-7108.

Volunteer to Count or Band Birds of Prey

The Pacific States' largest bird of prey migration passes over the Marin Headlands each autumn. Since 1983, the Golden Gate Raptor Observatory has trained volunteers to study these magnificent hawks, eagles, kites, vultures, and harriers – collectively called “raptors” – using counting banding, and telemetry.

More than 270 GGRO volunteers, from all over the greater Bay Area, tracked and monitored the 1997 migration of 19 different raptor species, and now new volunteers are being sought for the 1998 training class. Volunteers must be at least 18 years of age, and able to commit to one regular day every two weeks from August through December 1998, along with some weekend and evening trainings in July.

The GGRO's 1998 Recruitment Meetings are open to the public. Come on Tuesday, April 28th, or Thursday, April 30th, from 7 to 9:30 p.m., OR come on Saturday, May 2nd, from 10 a.m. to 12:30, to see if you want to get involved with the GGRO. All meetings will be held at Golden Gate National Recreation Area headquarters, Building 201 at Upper Fort Mason, in San Francisco. Enter the fort at Franklin and Bay.

For more information, call the GGRO (415) 331-0750.

San Francisco Bay Wetlands Conference

The Campaign to Save California Wetlands, a coalition of more than 160 endorsing organizations, will hold a Bay Area Regional Wetlands Conference on May 9th and 10th at the University of California at Berkeley. At least 100 wetlands and clean water advocates are expected to attend the two-day event, co-sponsored by CalPIRG, with support from the Clean Water Network and the Mary A. Crocker Trust.

Creating the Wetlands Activist Agenda

Assemblywoman Carole Migden has been invited to present her proposed Clean Water Enforcement Act, and long-time wetlands champion State Senator Byron Sher has been asked to provide his perspective.

Nationally recognized environmental pollster Celinda Lake will conduct a session on message development, an invaluable skill for all environmental advocates. An intensive, hands-on media training session by Scott Denman will be offered on Sunday afternoon on a reservation-only basis.

A major goal of the conference is to develop a Statement of

Principles that will define the standards the state should use to protect wetlands and that will set goals for the restoration of wetlands in the Bay Area. Issue-oriented breakout sessions will provide an opportunity for all participants to refine the Statement of Principles, which will guide a follow-up media campaign as well as a broad-based wetlands advocacy program.

The Conference will be useful to people with a broad range of familiarity with wetlands issues, from hard-core experts to the hunters, fishers, farmers, and water quality advocates who want to know more about the wetlands connection.

The registration fee, which will include lunch, is only \$15.00, payable in advance. Scholarships will be available in exchange for volunteering at the conference. To request conference registration materials, please call (415) 585-5304.





January 26 – February 18, 1998

By February 21, rainfall records dating back to 1878 were exceeded for many northern California locations, including San Francisco, Monterey, and San Jose. Road damage was extensive, making access to such favorite birding areas as Point Reyes and the Panoche Valley difficult or impossible. Nevertheless, persistent (and hardy!) birders managed to discover several rarities. There were also notable effects of the stormy weather on species distribution; e.g., inland reports of White-winged Scoters, Brants, and "wrecks" of Red Phalaropes driven towards shore by high winds. The decline in wintering duck species that often begins during February was not so evident as in recent years.

Loons to Ducks

A **Yellow-billed Loon** was found far offshore at Tahoma, Lake

Tahoe, PLA, Feb. 13 (TE). This location is an uncommon inland site for this rare winter visitor. That bird was in company with 4 Common Loons and a Pacific Loon, also away from their normal coastal winter habitat. The Monterey Bay **Yellow-billed Loon** reported previously was rediscovered Feb. 26 (per MPRBA). The Laysan Albatross visiting Point Arena, MEN, was still present as of Feb. 22 (GC). Single Laysan Albatross were recorded on Monterey Bay pelagic trips, Feb. 15 and 26 (per MPRBA), and another individual was inside San Francisco Bay near the San Rafael Bridge, MRN, Feb. 22 (DN). The Feb. 15 Monterey Bay trip also found 13 Black-footed Albatross, 64 Northern Fulmars, 5 Pink-footed Shearwaters, and single Sooty and Short-tailed Shearwaters (DLSH). One other Pink-footed Shearwater was spotted offshore from Agate Beach, MRN, Feb. 3 (KH). A **Manx Shearwater** was also seen on the Feb. 15 pelagic trip.

Over 119 Tundra Swans were counted over San Benito and southern Santa Clara counties Feb. 8 (SR). On Jan. 28, a **Whooper Swan** (*Cygnus cygnus*) was reported at the Lower Klamath Wildlife Refuge, SIS (TV). There are only a few northern California records of this Eurasian species, a close relative of the Trumpeter Swan, with most sightings at approximately the same location as this individual. There is some dispute in this case as to whether the bird actually crossed the Oregon border into California, however. Two reports of the **Trumpeter Swan** (*Cygnus buccinator*) also occurred during the period. One was from the Lower Klamath Wildlife Refuge, SIS, Feb. 14 and the other was in the Ash

Creek Wildlife Area, LAS, Feb. 15 (DS). According to Small, 1994, most of these rare winter visitants originate from Alaskan populations of this species and not from the introduced colonies in Washington and Oregon.

A single male Tufted Duck was at Bolinas Lagoon, MRN, from Feb. 1–25 (RS fide KH, MF, DS), and a pair were seen at Schoellenberger Park, SON, Feb. 27–28 (AW, DS). Again this month, there were at least 7 sightings of Eurasian Wigeons from Alameda, Marin, San Benito, Santa Clara, and San Francisco counties. One wintering Harlequin Duck, known affectionately as "George," lingered in the Monterey Bay area, MTY, through February (DLSH and MPRBA), another 3 were seen at Bodega Harbor, SON, Feb. 2 (RS), and 2 others were at Devil's Gulch, MRN, Feb. 22 (DSc). There were more than 80 Hooded Mergansers reported from Alameda, Marin, Santa Clara, Placer, and San Francisco counties, with a high count of 44 individuals at Lake Tahoe, PLA, Feb. 13 (TE). An interesting Wood Duck report was of 20 birds on a flooded prairie near Hwy. 1, Olema, MRN, Feb. 2 (RS). At least 15 Oldsquaw were seen over Monterey, Sonoma, and San Mateo counties, 17 Blue-winged Teal were found over Butte, Merced, Marin, Santa Cruz and San Mateo counties, and 25 or more Barrow's Goldeneyes were reported from Contra Costa, Santa Cruz, and Sonoma counties. There were scattered reports of Surf and White-winged Scoters from inland locations in Tehama, San Benito, and Placer counties, probably related to the stormy conditions. By far the most unusual duck was the report of a **Falcated Duck**,

Warbler sightings

<i>Black-throated Gray Warbler</i>			
Feb. 15–	Mt. Lake Pk., SF	HF	
Feb 22			
<i>Palm Warbler</i>			
Feb. 28	Schoellenberger	AW	
	Pk., SON		
<i>Black-and-white Warbler</i>			
Feb. 15	Neary's Lagoon,	RS	
	SCZ		
<i>Virginia's Warbler</i>			
Jan. 31	Natural Bridges	BF	
	SP, SCZ		
<i>American Redstart</i>			
Jan. 27	Pt. Pinole Regional	SG	
	Shoreline, CC		

known until recently as the Falcated Teal, spotted at Gray Lodge NWR, BUT, on Feb. 15 (JT). This Asian species, *Anas falcata*, has no previously accepted California records, and the question of its origin will undoubtedly be discussed at length. The possibility that it is an escapee cannot be ruled out at present.

Raptors to Alcids

Raptor reports were scarce this month, with single Rough-legged Hawks over Bair Is., SM, Feb. 4 (RT) and another at Jersey Is. Rd., CC, Feb. 13 (GF). A Ferruginous Hawk was reported at Shotgun Pass, SBT, Feb. 16 (PG). Mountain Plovers (up to 33) were still off New Idria Rd., SBT, Feb. 16 (PG). Two Pacific Golden-plovers were at Lawson's Landing, MRN, Feb. 15 (DS). Two Lesser Yellowlegs were seen on Webb Tract Rd., CC, Feb. 14 (MF), 20 at the mouth of San Leandro Creek, ALA, Feb. 11 (SC), and 6 on Jersey Island Rd, CC, Feb. 9 (SG). Unusual for the location were 2 Black Oystercatchers on the Emery Point spit, ALA, Feb. 16 (KS).

Individual Rock Sandpipers were again reported from several locations. The bird first seen Nov. 14 remained on the Santa Cruz coast until at least Feb. 15 (RS, MOB). Another individual remained at MacKerricher State Park, MEN, Feb. 9 (DT), and the Bodega Head, SON, bird continued as of Feb. 9 (RL). A fourth Rock Sandpiper was at Pillar Pt. Harbor, SM, Feb. 14 (MD). A **Ruff** was at the Merced NWR, MER, Feb. 1 (DSc). A very uncommon winter sighting was that of a Pectoral Sandpiper in West Placer County on Jan. 31 (TE). The only jaeger report for the period was that of a Parasitic Jaeger at Bolinas Lagoon, MRN, Feb. 3 (KH).

The probable immature (first-winter) **Lesser Black-backed Gull**, first reported Oct. 13 and discussed previously, was still at Lake Cunningham, San Jose, SCL, Jan. 31 (AE). The first winter **Laughing Gull** originally reported Jan. 25 at the gull roost on Moss Landing, MTY, remained until at least Feb. 24 (MF, MPRBA). A second individual, at Limantour Beach, PRNS, MRN, was last seen on Feb. 7, just before the road was closed due to storm damage (DS). A third Laughing Gull, an adult winter bird and potentially a first county record, was reported at Pillar Point, SM, Feb. 3 (DP). Nine Glaucous Gulls were reported over Alameda, Monterey, Placer, San Mateo, Solano, Sonoma, and Santa Cruz counties. Four Black-legged Kittiwakes were seen on the Feb. 15 Monterey Bay boat trip (DLSH), one was at the Bolinas Lagoon, MRN, Feb. 8 (KH), and another at Crespi Pond, MTY, Feb. 24 (MPRBA).

The "**Kumlien's**" **Iceland Gull** controversy continued, with a presumptive first winter bird remaining at Moss Landing, MTY, through at least Feb. 21, and it was apparently also seen at Crespi Pond, Pacific Grove, MTY, on that date (RS, MPRBA). Study of this individual has led some observers to re-emphasize that separation of this subspecies from Thayer's Gull is very difficult in the field. Cassin's auklets were scarce again during the period, which may be an El Nino effect, with only 6 seen on the Feb. 15 Monterey pelagic trip, although there were 200 Rhinoceros Auklets on the same day (DLSH).

Sapsuckers to Sparrows

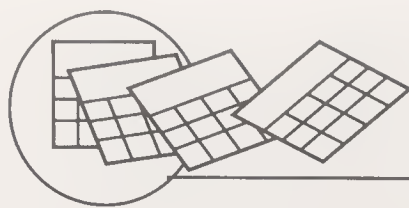
A Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, first seen during the CBC, continued at

Abbreviations for Observers: KB, Ken Burton, GC, George Chamot, SC, Steve Crivell, AD, Al DeMartini, JD, Jack Dincen, MD, Matthew Dotter, LL, Leo Ldsen, AF, Al Fasnier, FL, Ted Elliott, ML, Mike Feighner, GL, George Finger, BL, Brian Fitch, HL, Harry Fuller, SG, Steve Glover, PG, Phil Gordon, KH, Keith Hansen, JH, John Hunter, RL, Rick Lebadour, DN, Dan Nelson, DP, Doug Pomeroy, SR, Steve Rottenborn, DSc, Don Schmoldt, DS, Doug Shaw, DLSH, Debra Love Shearwater, RS, Rich Stallcup, KS, Kirk Swenson, DL, Dorothy Tobkui, RI, Ron Thorn, JL, John Trochet, IV, Tom Vandenburg, AW, Alan White

Abbreviations for Counties and Others: ALA, Alameda; AMSP, Andrew Molera State Park, BUT, Butte; CBC, Christmas Bird Count, CC, Contra Costa, GGP, Golden Gate Park, HLM, Humboldt, LAS, Lassen; MAD, Madera, MEN, Mendocino; MER, Merced; MOD, Modoc, MPRBA, Monterey Peninsula Rare Bird Alert, MRN, Marin; MTY, Monterey, PLA, Placer, PRNS, Pt. Reyes National Seashore, SIS, Siskiyou, SBI, San Benito, SCL, Santa Clara; SCZ, Santa Cruz, SL, San Francisco, SM, San Mateo; SOL, Solano, SON, Sonoma; TRI, Trinity, YOL, Yolo.

Mills College, ALA, Feb. 2 (KS). One Red-naped Sapsucker was found at Folsom Lake, PLA, Feb. 13 (IE), and a Lewis' Woodpecker was at AMSP, MTY, Jan. 26 (MPRBA). A **Dusky-capped Flycatcher**, an Arizona/Texas species, first reported Dec. 9, was still at Neary's Lagoon, SCZ, as of Feb. 15 (RS). A **Least Flycatcher** was seen at the Todd Ranch River Access, TRI, Feb. 28 (JH, DS). Early swallows included 10 Cliff Swallows near Los Banos, MER, Jan. 31 (DSc), a Northern Rough-winged Swallow at South Side Marsh, SBT, Feb. 4 (AD), and a Barn Swallow at Las Gallinas Sewage Ponds, MRN, Feb. 8 (KB). The only Mountain Bluebird reported came from West Sacramento, YOL, Jan. 31 (LE). Individual Northern Shrikes were seen at Butte Valley NWR, SIS, Feb. 14 and in Modoc County on Feb. 15 (DS) as well as at Limantour, PRNS, MRN, Feb. 27 (JD). Wood Warblers continued to be very sparse this month (see chart).

One Lark Bunting was still at Panoche Rd, SBT, Jan. 31 (DLSH). A White-throated Sparrow was spotted at the Hayward BART station, ALA, Feb. 8 (PG), and single American Tree Sparrows were found at Tule Lake, SIS, Feb. 14 and at Modoc NWR, MOD, Feb. 15 (DS). Brewer Rd, PLA, hosted three *Calcarius* species Feb. 13-16: one Chestnut-collared Longspur, 1-2 Lapland Longspurs, and 3-5 McCown's Longspurs (TE, DS).



April Meeting

Marine Mammals of the Northern California Coast

Mark Berman, staff campaigner for Earth Island Institute's International Marine Mammal Project will be speaking at our next monthly meeting to discuss our ocean neighbors and the issues that they face.

Gray, Humpback,
and Blue whales,
California

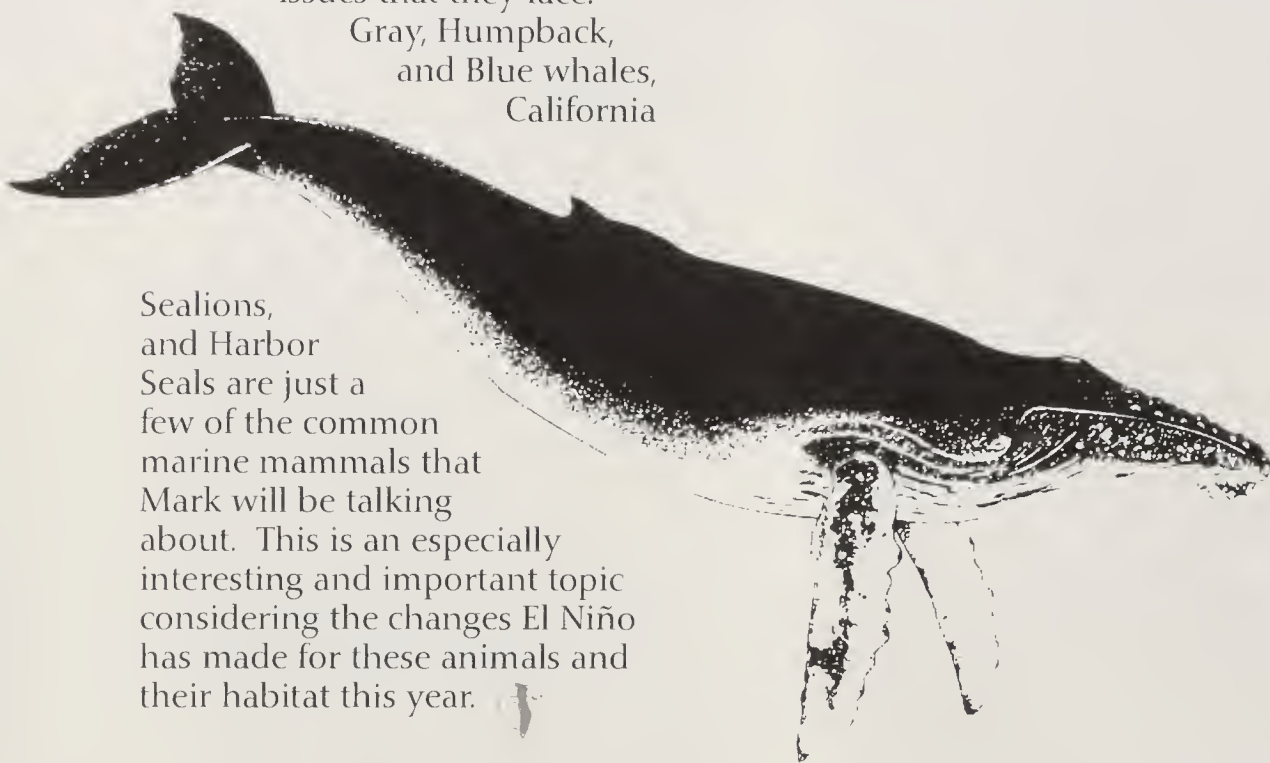
Sealions,
and Harbor
Seals are just a
few of the common
marine mammals that
Mark will be talking
about. This is an especially
interesting and important topic
considering the changes El Niño
has made for these animals and
their habitat this year.

Thursday, April 17

7:30 p.m.

Northbrae Community Church

941 The Alameda, Berkeley



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